

December 19, 2000

Bipartisan Group of Illinois Members Call on Governor Ryan to Take Advantage of Federal Law to Expand Treatment to Low Income Women with Cervical and Breast Cancer

WASHINGTON, D.C. - A bipartisan group of Illinois members today called on Governor Ryan to take advantage of a recent bill signed into law that will help low income women with cervical and breast cancer.

In a letter organized by U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), the members wrote that the Breast and Cervical Cancer Treatment Act "is a landmark bill that can significantly improve women's health by expanding access to care for the treatment of breast and cervical cancer. We were proud to support this bill and are writing to ask that you act now to ensure that Illinois takes advantage of the opportunities it provides."

The added, "We urge you to take the next steps necessary to participate in this new, life-saving initiative by having the Department of Public Aid develop a plan immediately to enroll Illinois and by working with our legislature to approve the plan and appropriate the necessary funds."

The letter to Governor Ryan along with a list of signers is below.

December 15, 2000

The Honorable George H. Ryan
Office of the Governor
207 State Capitol
Springfield, Illinois 60706

Dear Governor Ryan:

On October 24, the bipartisan Breast and Cervical Cancer Treatment Act, was signed into law. H.R. 4386 is a landmark bill that can significantly improve women's health by expanding access to care for the treatment of breast and cervical cancer. We were proud to support this bill and are writing to ask that you act now to ensure that Illinois takes advantage of the opportunities it provides.

The Breast and Cervical Cancer Treatment Act gives Illinois the option of providing Medicaid coverage to low-income women who are screened and diagnosed with breast and cervical cancer through the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program. Many women, often working in low wage jobs that do not offer health

insurance, face great difficulties in obtaining the medical care that they need in order to survive. With enactment of the Breast and Cervical Cancer Treatment Act, they are now one step closer to having access to lifesaving treatment. The new law provides an enhanced match - identical to that of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) -- as an incentive to enroll in the treatment program. In addition, our participation in this program will likely result in decreased state costs since many women screened and diagnosed in the program are currently being treated with state funds, such as in public hospitals.

We urge you to take the next steps necessary to participate in this new, life-saving initiative by having the Department of Public Aid develop a plan immediately to enroll Illinois and by working with our legislature to approve the plan and appropriate the necessary funds. As you may know, there is an effort to have as many states as possible enroll in the treatment program by Mothers Day 2001. We hope that Illinois will be one of the states to do so, and we will do whatever we can to help you meet that goal.

We look forward to working with you to provide women in our state with access to high-quality treatment.

Sincerely,

*Jan Schakowsky John Shimkus
Member of Congress Member of Congress*

*Lane Evans Ray LaHood
Member of Congress Member of Congress*

*Bobby L. Rush Philip M. Crane
Member of Congress Member of Congress*

*Rod R. Blagojevich Judy Biggert
Member of Congress Member of Congress*

*Jerry F. Costello David D. Phelps
Member of Congress Member of Congress*